LIFE IS A DREAM

Calderón de la Barca

English Version by Roy Campbell

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

BASIL, *King of Poland*
SEGISMUND, *Prince*
ASTOLFO, *Duke of Muscovy*
CLOTALDO, *old man*
CLARION, *a comical servant*
ROSAURA, *a lady*
STELLA, *a princess*
Soldiers, guards, musicians, servants, retinues, women

The scene is laid in the court of Poland, a nearby fortress, and the open country.

ACT I

On one side a craggy mountain: on the other a rude tower whose base serves as a prison for SEGISMUND. *The door facing the spectators is open. The action begins at nightfall.*

ROSAURA, *dressed as a man, appears on the rocks climbing down to the plain: behind her comes* CLARION.

ROSAURA. You headlong hippogriff who match the gale
In rushing to and fro, you lightning-flicker
Who give no light, you scaleless fish, you bird
Who have no coloured plumes, you animal
Who have no natural instinct, tell me whither
You lead me stumbling through this labyrinth
Of naked crags! Stay here upon this peak
And be a Phaëthon to the brute-creation!
For I, pathless save only for the track
The laws of destiny dictate for me,
Shall, blind and desperate, descend this height
Whose furrowed brows are frowning at the sun.
How rudely, Poland, you receive a stranger
(Hardly arrived, but to be treated hardly)
And write her entry down in blood with thorns.
My plight attests this well, but after all,
Where did the wretchèd ever pity find?

CLARION. Say *two* so wretchèd. Don't you leave me out
When you complain! If we two sallied out
From our own country, questing high adventure,
And after so much madness and misfortune
Are still two here, and were two when we fell
Down those rough crags—shall I not be offended
To share the trouble yet forego the credit?

ROSAURA. I did not give you shares in my complaint
So as not to rob you of the right to sorrow
Upon your own account. There's such relief
In venting grief that a philosopher

Once said that sorrows should not be bemoaned
But sought for pleasure.

CLARION. Philosopher?
I call him a long-bearded, drunken sot
And would they'd cudgelled him a thousand blows
To give him something worth his while lamenting!
But, madam, what should we do, by ourselves,
On foot and lost at this late hour of day,
Here on this desert mountain far away—
The sun departing after fresh horizons?

ROSAURA. Clarion, how can I answer, being both
The partner of your plight and your dilemma?

CLARION. Would anyone believe such strange events?

ROSAURA. If there my sight is not deceived by fancy,
In the last timid light that yet remains
I seem to see a building.

CLARION. Either my hopes
Are lying or I see the signs myself.

ROSAURA. Between the towering crags, there stands so small
A royal palace that the lynx-eyed sun
Could scarce perceive it at midday, so rude
In architecture that it seems but one
Rock more down-toppled from the sun-kissed crags
That form the jaggèd crest.

CLARION. Let's go closer,
For we have stared enough: it would be better
To let the inmates make us welcome.

ROSAURA. See:
The door, or, rather, that funereal gap,
Is yawning wide—whence night itself seems born,
Flowing out from its black, rugged centre.

A sound of chains is heard.

CLARION. Heavens! What's that I hear?

ROSAURA. I have become
A block immovable of ice and fire.

CLARION. Was that a little chain? Why, I'll be hanged
If that is not the clanking ghost of some
Past galley-slave—my terror proves it is!

SEGISMUND. Oh, miserable me! Unhappy me!

ROSAURA. How sad a cry that is! I fear new trials
And torments.

CLARION. It's a fearful sound.

ROSAURA. Oh, come,
My Clarion, let us fly from suffering!

CLARION. I'm in such sorry trim, I've not the spirit
Even to run away.

ROSAURA. And if you had,
You'd not have seen that door, not known of it.
When one's in doubt, the common saying goes
One walks between two lights.

CLARION. I'm the reverse.
It's not that way with me.

ROSAURA. What then disturbs you?

CLARION. I walk in doubt between two darknesses.

ROSAURA. Is not that feeble exhalation there
A light? That pallid star whose fainting tremors,
Pulsing a doubtful warmth of glimmering rays,
Make even darker with its spectral glow
That gloomy habitation? Yes! because
By its reflection (though so far away)
I recognise a prison, grim and sombre,
The sepulchre of some poor living carcase.
And, more to wonder at, a man lies there
Clothed in the hides of savage beasts, with limbs
Loaded with fetters, and a single lamp
For company. So, since we cannot flee,
Let us stay here and listen to his plaint
And what his sorrows are.

SEGISMUND. Unhappy me!
Oh, miserable me! You heavens above,
I try to think what crime I've done against you
By being born. Although to have been born,
I know, is an offence, and with just cause
I bear the rigours of your punishment:
Since to be born is man's worst crime. But yet
I long to know (to clarify my doubts)

What greater crime, apart from being born,
Can thus have earned my greater chastisement.
Aren't others born like me? And yet they seem
To boast a freedom that I've never known.
The bird is born, and in the hues of beauty
Clothed with its plumes, yet scarce has it become
A feathered posy—or a flower with wings—
When through ethereal halls it cuts its way,
Refusing the kind shelter of its nest.
And I, who have more soul than any bird,
Must have less liberty?
The beast is born, and with its hide bright-painted,
In lovely tints, has scarce become a spangled
And starry constellation (thanks to the skilful
Brush of the Painter) than its earthly needs
Teach it the cruelty to prowl and kill,
The monster of its labyrinth of flowers.
Yet I, with better instincts than a beast,
Must have less liberty?
The fish is born, the birth of spawn and slime,
That does not even live by breathing air.
No sooner does it feel itself a skiff
Of silver scales upon the wave than swiftly
It roves about in all directions taking
The measure of immensity as far
As its cold blood's capacity allows.
Yet I, with greater freedom of the will,
Must have less liberty?
The brook is born, and like a snake unwinds
Among the flowers. No sooner, silver serpent,
Does it break through the blooms than it regales
And thanks them with its music for their kindness,
Which opens to its course the majesty
Of the wide plain. Yet I, with far more life,
Must have less liberty?
This fills me with such passion, I become
Like the volcano Etna, and could tear
Pieces of my own heart out of my breast!
What law, justice, or reason can decree
That man alone should never know the joys

And be alone excepted from the rights
God grants a fish, a bird, a beast, a brook?

ROSAURA. His words have filled me full of fear and pity.

SEGISMUND. Who is it overheard my speech? Clotaldo?

CLARION. Say "yes!"

ROSAURA. It's only a poor wretch, alas,
Who in these cold ravines has overheard
Your sorrows.

SEGISMUND. Then I'll kill you

Seizes her.

So as to leave no witness of my frailty.
I'll tear you into bits with these strong arms!

CLARION. I'm deaf. I wasn't able to hear that.

ROSAURA. If you were human born, it is enough
That I should kneel to you for you to spare me.

SEGISMUND. Your voice has softened me, your presence halted me,
And now, confusingly, I feel respect
For you. Who are you? Though here I have learned
So little of the world, since this grim tower
Has been my cradle and my sepulchre;
And though since I was born (if you can say
I really have been born) I've only seen
This rustic desert where in misery
I dwell alone, a living skeleton,
An animated corpse; and though till now,
I never spoke, save to one man who hears
My griefs and through whose converse I have heard
News of the earth and of the sky; and though,
To astound you more, and make you call me
A human monster, I dwell here, and am
A man of the wild animals, a beast
Among the race of men; and though in such
Misfortune, I have studied human laws,
Instructed by the birds, and learned to measure
The circles of the gentle stars, you only
Have curbed my furious rage, amazed my vision,
And filled with wonderment my sense of hearing.

Each time I look at you, I feel new wonder!
The more I see of you, the more I long
To go on seeing more of you. I think
My eyes are dropsical, to go on drinking
What it is death for them to drink, because
They go on drinking that which I am dying
To see and that which, seen, will deal me death.
Yet let me gaze on you and die, since I
Am so bewitched I can no longer think
What not seeing you would do to me—the sight
Itself being fatal! that would be more hard
Than dying, madness, rage, and fiercest grief:
It would be life—worst fate of all because
The gift of life to such a wretchèd man
Would be the gift of death to happiness!

ROSAURA. Astonished as I look, amazed to hear,
I know not what to say nor what to ask.
All I can say is that heaven guided me
Here to be comforted, if it is comfort
To see another sadder than oneself.
They say a sage philosopher of old,
Being so poor and miserable that he
Lived on the few plain herbs he could collect,
One day exclaimed: "Could any man be poorer
Or sadder than myself?"—when, turning round,
He saw the very answer to his words.
For there another sage philosopher
Was picking up the scraps he'd thrown away.
I lived cursing my fortune in this world
And asked within me: "Is there any other
Suffers so hard a fate?" Now out of pity
You've given me the answer. For within me
I find upon reflection that my griefs
Would be as joys to you and you'd receive them
To give you pleasure. So if they perchance
In any measure may afford relief,
Listen attentively to my misfortune
And take what is left over for yourself.
I am . . .

CLOTALDO, *within.* Guards of the tower! You sluggards
Or cowards, you have let two people pass
Into the prison bounds . . .

ROSAURA. Here's more confusion!

SEGISMUND. That is Clotaldo, keeper of my prison.
Are my misfortunes still not at an end?

CLOTALDO. Come. Be alert, and either seize or slay them
Before they can resist!

VOICES, *within.* Treason! Betrayal!

CLARION. Guards of the tower who let us pass unhindered,
Since there's a choice, to seize us would be simpler.

Enter CLOTALDO *with soldiers. He holds a pistol and they all wear masks.*

CLOTALDO, *aside to the soldiers.*
Cover your faces, all! It's a precaution
Imperative that nobody should know us
While we are here.

CLARION. What's this? A masquerade?

CLOTALDO. O you, who ignorantly passed the bounds
And limits of this region, banned to all—
Against the king's decree which has forbidden
That any should find out the prodigy
Hidden in these ravines—yield up your weapons
Or else this pistol, like a snake of metal,
Will spit the piercing venom of two shots
With scandalous assault upon the air.

SEGISMUND. Tyrannic master, ere you harm these people
Let my life be the spoil of these sad bonds
In which (I swear it by Almighty God)
I'll sooner rend myself with hands and teeth
Amid these rocks than see them harmed and mourn
Their suffering.

CLOTALDO. Since you know, Segismund,
That your misfortunes are so huge that, even
Before your birth, you died by heaven's decree,
And since you know these walls and binding chains
Are but the brakes and curbs to your proud frenzies,
What use is it to bluster?

To the guards.

Shut the door
Of this close prison! Hide him in its depths!

SEGISMUND. Ah, heavens, how justly you denied me freedom!
For like a Titan I would rise against you,
Pile jasper mountains high on stone foundations
And climb to burst the windows of the sun!

CLOTALDO. Perhaps you suffer so much pain today
Just to forestall that feat.

ROSAURA. Now that I see
How angry pride offends you, I'd be foolish
Not to plead humbly at your feet for life.
Be moved by me to pity. It would be
Notoriously harsh that neither pride
Nor humbleness found favour in your eyes!

CLARION. And if neither Humility nor Pride
Impress you (characters of note who act
And motivate a thousand mystery plays)
Let me, here, who am neither proud nor humble,
But merely something halfway in between,
Plead to you both for shelter and for aid.

CLOTALDO. Ho, there!

SOLDIER. Sir?

CLOTALDO. Take their weapons. Bind their eyes
So that they cannot see the way they're led.

ROSAURA. This is my sword. To nobody but you
I yield it, since you're, after all, the chief.
I cannot yield to one of meaner rank.

CLARION. My sword is such that I will freely give it
To the most mean and wretched.

To one soldier.

Take it, you!

ROSAURA. And if I have to die, I'll leave it to you
In witness of your mercy. It's a pledge
Of great worth and may justly be esteemed
For someone's sake who wore it long ago.

CLOTALDO, *apart.* Each moment seems to bring me new misfortune!

ROSAURA. Because of that, I ask you to preserve
This sword with care. Since if inconstant Fate
Consents to the remission of my sentence,
It has to win me honour. Though I know not
The secret that it carries, I do know
It has got one—unless I trick myself—
And prize it just as the sole legacy
My father left me.

CLOTALDO. Who then was your father?

ROSAURA. I never knew.

CLOTALDO. And why have you come here?

ROSAURA. I came to Poland to avenge a wrong.

CLOTALDO, *apart.*
Sacred heavens!
On taking the sword he becomes very perturbed.
What's this? Still worse and worse.
I am perplexed and troubled with more fears.
Aloud.
Tell me: who gave that sword to you?

ROSAURA. A woman.

CLOTALDO. Her name?

ROSAURA. A secret I am forced to keep.

CLOTALDO. What makes you think this sword contains a secret?

ROSAURA. That she who gave it to me said: "Depart
To Poland. There with subtlety and art
Display it so that all the leading people
And noblemen can see you wearing it,
And I know well that there's a lord among them
Who will both shelter you and grant you favour."
But, lest he should be dead, she did not name him.

CLOTALDO, *aside.* Protect me, heavens! What is this I hear?
I cannot say if real or imagined
But here's the sword I gave fair Violante
In token that, whoever in the future
Should come from her to me wearing this sword,

Would find in me a tender father's love.
Alas, what can I do in such a pass,
When he who brings the sword to win my favour
Brings it to find his own red death instead
Arriving at my feet condemned already?
What strange perplexity! How hard a fate!
What an inconstant fortune to be plagued with!
This is my son not only by all signs
But also by the promptings of my heart,
Since, seeing him, my heart seems to cry out
To him, and beat its wings, and, though unable
To break the locks, behaves as one shut in,
Who, hearing noises in the street outside,
Cranes from the window-ledge. Just so, not knowing
What's really happening, but hearing sounds,
My heart runs to my eyes which are its windows
And out of them flows into bitter tears.
Protect me, heaven! What am I to do?
To take him to the king is certain death.
To hide him is to break my sacred oath
And the strong law of homage. From one side
Love of one's own, and from the other loyalty—
Call me to yield. Loyalty to my king
(Why do I doubt?) comes before life and honour.
Then live my loyalty, and let him die!
When I remember, furthermore, he came
To avenge an injury—a man insulted
And unavenged is in disgrace. My son
Therefore he is not, nor of noble blood.
But if some danger has mischanced, from which
No one escapes, since honour is so fragile
That any act can smash it, and it takes
A stain from any breath of air, what more
Could any nobleman have done than he,
Who, at the cost of so much risk and danger,
Comes to avenge his honour? Since he's so brave
He is my son, and my blood's in his veins.
And so betwixt the one doubt and the other,
The most important mean between extremes
Is to go to the king and tell the truth—

That he's my son, to kill, if so he wishes.
Perhaps my loyalty thus will move his mercy
And if I thus can merit a live son
I'll help him to avenge his injury.
But if the king prove constant in his rigour
And deal him death, he'll die in ignorance
That I'm his father.

Aloud to ROSAURA *and* CLARION.

Come then, strangers, come!
And do not fear that you have no companions
In your misfortunes, since, in equal doubt,
Tossed between life and death, I cannot guess
Which is the greater evil or the less.

A hall at the royal palace, in court

Enter ASTOLFO *and soldiers at one side: from the other side* PRINCESS STELLA *and ladies. Military music and salvos.*

ASTOLFO. To greet your excellent bright beams
As brilliant as a comet's rays,
The drums and brasses mix their praise
With those of fountains, birds, and streams.
With sounds alike, in like amaze,
Your heavenly face each voice salutes,
Which puts them in such lively fettle,
The trumpets sound like birds of metal,
The songbirds play like feathered flutes.
And thus they greet you, fair señora—
The salvos, as their queen, the brasses,
As to Minerva when she passes,
The songbirds to the bright Aurora,
And all the flowers and leaves and grasses
As doing homage unto Flora,
Because you come to cheat the day
Which now the night has covered o'er—
Aurora in your spruce array,

Flora in peace, Pallas in war,
But in my heart the queen of May.

STELLA. If human voice could match with acts
You would have been unwise to say
Hyperboles that a few facts
May well refute some other day
Confounding all this martial fuss
With which I struggle daringly,
Since flatteries you proffer thus
Do not accord with what I see.
Take heed that it's an evil thing
And worthy of a brute accursed,
Loud praises with your mouth to sing
When in your heart you wish the worst.

ASTOLFO. Stella, you have been badly misinformed
If you doubt my good faith. Here let me beg you
To listen to my plea and hear me out.
The third Eugtorgius died, the King of Poland.
Basil, his heir, had two fair sisters who
Bore you, my cousin, and myself. I would not
Tire you with all that happened here. You know
Clorilene was your mother who enjoys,
Under a better reign, her starry throne.
She was the elder. Lovely Recisunda
(Whom may God cherish for a thousand years!)
The younger one, my mother and your aunt,
Was wed in Muscovy. Now to return:
Basil has yielded to the feebleness
Of age, loves learnèd study more than women,
Has lost his wife, is childless, will not marry.
And so it comes that you and I both claim
The heirdom of the realm. You claim that you
Were daughter to the elder daughter. I
Say that my being born a man, although
Son of the younger daughter, gives me title
To be preferred. We've told the king, our uncle,
Of both of our intentions. And he answered
That he would judge between our rival claims,
For which the time and place appointed was

Today and here. For that same reason I
Have left my native Muscovy. With that
Intent I come—not seeking to wage war
But so that you might thus wage war on me!
May Love, wise god, make true what people say
(Your "people" is a wise astrologer)
By settling this through your being chosen queen—
Queen and my consort, sovereign of my will;
My uncle crowning you, for greater honour;
Your courage conquering, as it deserves;
My love applauding you, its emperor!

STELLA. To such chivalrous gallantry, my breast
Cannot hold out. The imperial monarchy
I wish were mine only to make it yours—
Although my love is not quite satisfied
That you are to be trusted since your speech
Is somewhat contradicted by that portrait
You carry in the locket round your neck.

ASTOLFO. I'll give you satisfaction as to that.

Drums.

But these loud instruments will not permit it
That sound the arrival of the king and council.

Enter KING BASIL *with his following.*

STELLA. Wise Thales . . .

ASTOLFO. Learned Euclid . . .

STELLA. Among the signs . . .

ASTOLFO. Among the stars . . .

STELLA. Where you preside in power . . .

ASTOLFO. Where you reside . . .

STELLA. And plot their paths . . .

ASTOLFO. And trace their fiery trails . . .

STELLA. Describing . . .

ASTOLFO. . . . Measuring and judging them . . .

STELLA. Please read my stars that I, in humble bonds . . .

ASTOLFO. Please read them, so that I in soft embraces . . .

STELLA. May twine as ivy to this tree!

ASTOLFO. May find
Myself upon my knees before these feet!

BASIL. Come and embrace me, niece and nephew. Trust me,
Since you're both loyal to my loving precepts,
And come here so affectionately both—
In nothing shall I leave you cause to cavil,
And both of you as equals will be treated.
The gravity of what I have to tell
Oppresses me, and all I ask of you
Is silence: the event itself will claim
Your wonderment. So be attentive now,
Belovèd niece and nephew, illustrious courtiers,
Relatives, friends, and subjects! You all know
That for my learning I have merited
The surname of The Learnèd, since the brush
Of great Timanthes, and Lisippus' marbles—
Stemming oblivion (consequence of time)—
Proclaimed me to mankind Basil the Great.
You know the science that I most affect
And most esteem is subtle mathematics
(By which I forestall time, cheat fame itself)
Whose office is to show things gradually.
For when I look my tables up and see,
Present before me, all the news and actions
Of centuries to come, I gain on Time—
Since Time recounts whatever I have said
After I say it. Those snowflaking haloes,
Those canopies of crystal spread on high,
Lit by the sun, cut by the circling moon,
Those diamond orbs, those globes of radiant crystal
Which the bright stars adorn, on which the signs
Parade in blazing excellence, have been
My chiefest study all through my long years.
They are the volumes on whose adamantine
Pages, bound up in sapphire, heaven writes,
In lines of burnished gold and vivid letters,
All that is due to happen, whether adverse
Or else benign. I read them in a flash,
So quickly that my spirit tracks their movements—
Whatever road they take, whatever goal

They aim at. Would to heaven that before
My genius had been the commentary
Writ in their margins, or the index to
Their pages, that my life had been the rubble,
The ruin, and destruction of their wrath,
And that my tragedy in them had ended,
Because, to the unlucky, even their merit
Is like a hostile knife, and he whom knowledge
Injures is but a murderer to himself.
And this I say myself, though my misfortunes
Say it far better, which, to marvel at,
I beg once more for silence from you all.
With my late wife, the queen, I had a son,
Unhappy son, to greet whose birth the heavens
Wore themselves out in prodigies and portents.
Ere the sun's light brought him live burial
Out of the womb (for birth resembles death)
His mother many times, in the delirium
And fancies of her sleep, saw a fierce monster
Bursting her entrails in a human form,
Born spattered with her lifeblood, dealing death,
The human viper of this century!
The day came for his birth, and every presage
Was then fulfilled, for tardily or never
Do the more cruel ones prove false. At birth
His horoscope was such that the bright sun,
Stained in its blood, entered ferociously
Into a duel with the moon above.
The whole earth seemed a rampart for the strife
Of heaven's two lights, who—though not hand-to-hand—
Fought light-to-light to gain the mastery!
The worst eclipse the sun has ever suffered
Since Christ's own death horrified earth and sky.
The whole earth overflowed with conflagrations
So that it seemed the final paroxysm
Of existence. The skies grew dark. Buildings shook.
The clouds rained stones. The rivers ran with blood.
In this delirious frenzy of the sun,
Thus, Segismund was born into the world,
Giving a foretaste of his character

By killing his own mother, seeming to speak thus
By his ferocity: "I am a man,
Because I have begun now to repay
All kindnesses with evil." To my studies
I went forthwith, and saw in all I studied
That Segismund would be the most outrageous
Of all men, the most cruel of all princes,
And impious of all monarchs, by whose acts
The kingdom would be torn up and divided
So as to be a school of treachery
And an academy of vices. He,
Risen in fury, amidst crimes and horrors,
Was born to trample me (with shame I say it)
And make of my grey hairs his very carpet.
Who is there but believes an evil Fate?
And more if he discovers it himself,
For self-love lends its credit to our studies.
So I, believing in the Fates, and in
The havoc that their prophecies predestined,
Determined to cage up this newborn tiger
To see if on the stars we sages have
Some power. I gave out that the prince had died
Stillborn, and, well-forewarned, I built a tower
Amidst the cliffs and boulders of yon mountains
Over whose tops the light scarce finds its way,
So stubbornly their obelisks and crags
Defend the entry to them. The strict laws
And edicts that I published then (declaring
That nobody might enter the forbidden
Part of the range) were passed on that account.
There Segismund lives to this day, a captive,
Poor and in misery, where, save Clotaldo,
His guardian, none have seen or talked to him.
The latter has instructed him in all
Branches of knowledge and in the Catholic faith,
Alone the witness of his misery.
There are three things to be considered now:
Firstly, Poland, that I love you greatly,
So much that I would free you from the oppression
And servitude of such a tyrant king.

He would not be a kindly ruler who
Would put his realm and homeland in such danger.
The second fact that I must bear in mind
Is this: that to deny my flesh and blood
The rights which law, both human and divine,
Concedes, would not accord with Christian charity,
For no law says that, to prevent another
Being a tyrant, I may be one myself,
And if my son's a tyrant, to prevent him
From doing outrage, I myself should do it.
Now here's the third and last point I would speak of,
Namely, how great an error it has been
To give too much belief to things predicted,
Because, even if his inclination should
Dictate some headlong, rash precipitancies,
They may perhaps not conquer him entirely,
For the most accursèd destiny, the most
Violent inclination, the most impious
Planet—all can but influence, not force,
The free will which man holds direct from God.
And so, between one motive and another
Vacillating discursively, I hit
On a solution that will stun you all.
I shall tomorrow, but without his knowing
He is my son—your king—place Segismund
(For that's the name with which he was baptised)
Here on my throne, beneath my canopy,
Yes, in my very place, that he may govern you
And take command. And you must all be here
To swear him fealty as his loyal subjects.
Three things may follow from this test, and these
I'll set against the three which I proposed.
The first is that should the prince prove prudent,
Stable, and benign—thus giving the lie
To all that prophecy reports of him—
Then you'll enjoy in him your rightful ruler
Who was so long a courtier of the mountains
And neighbour to the beasts. Here is the second:
If he prove proud, rash, cruel, and outrageous,
And with a loosened rein gallop unheeding

Across the plains of vice, I shall have done
My duty, and fulfilled my obligation
Of mercy. If I then re-imprison him,
That's incontestably a kingly deed—
Not cruelty but merited chastisement.
The third thing's this: that if the prince should be
As I've described him, then—by the love I feel
For you, my vassals—I shall give you worthier
Rulers to wear the sceptre and the crown;
Because your king and queen will be my nephew
And niece, each with an equal right to rule,
Each gaining the inheritance he merits,
And joined in faith of holy matrimony.
This I command you as a king, I ask you
As a kind father, as a sage I pray you,
As an experienced old man I tell you,
And (if it's true, as Spanish Seneca
Says, that the king is slave unto his nation)
This, as a humble slave, I beg of you.

ASTOLFO. If it behoves me to reply (being
The person most involved in this affair)
Then, in the name of all, let Segismund
Appear! It is enough that he's your son!

ALL. Give us our prince: we want him for our king!

BASIL. Subjects, I thank you for your kindly favour.
Accompany these, my two Atlases,
Back to their rooms. Tomorrow you shall see him.

ALL. Long live the great King Basil! Long live Basil!

Exeunt all, accompanying STELLA *and* ASTOLFO. *The* KING *remains.*

Enter CLOTALDO *with* ROSAURA *and* CLARION.

CLOTALDO. May I have leave to speak, sire?

BASIL. Oh, Clotaldo!
You're very welcome.

CLOTALDO. Thus to kneel before you
Is always welcome, sire—yet not today
When sad and evil Fate destroys the joy
Your presence normally concedes.

BASIL. What's wrong?

CLOTALDO. A great misfortune, sire, has come upon me
Just when I should have met it with rejoicing.

BASIL. Continue.

CLOTALDO. Sire, this beautiful young man
Who inadvertently and daringly
Came to the tower, wherein he saw the prince,
Is my . . .

BASIL. Do not afflict yourself, Clotaldo.
Had it not been just now, I should have minded,
I must confess. But I've revealed the secret,
And now it does not matter if he knows it.
Attend me afterwards. I've many things
To tell you. You in turn have many things
To do for me. You'll be my minister,
I warn you, in the most momentous action
The world has ever seen. These prisoners, lest you
Should think I blame your oversight, I'll pardon.

Exit.

CLOTALDO. Long may you live, great sire! A thousand years!

Aside.

Heaven improves our fates. I shall not tell him
Now that he is my son, since it's not needed
Till he's avenged.

Aloud.

Strangers, you may go free.

ROSAURA. Humbly I kiss your feet.

CLARION. Whilst I'll just *miss* them—
Old friends will hardly quibble at one letter.

ROSAURA. You've granted me my life, sir. I remain
Your servant and eternally your debtor.

CLOTALDO. No! It was not your life I gave you. No!
Since any wellborn man who, unavenged,
Nurses an insult does not live at all.
And seeing you have told me that you came
For that sole reason, it was not life I spared—
Life in disgrace is not a life at all.

Aside.

I see this spurs him.

ROSAURA. Freely I confess it—
Although you spared my life, it was no life.
But I will wipe my honour's stain so spotless
That after I have vanquished all my dangers
Life well may seem a shining gift from you.

CLOTALDO. Take here your burnished steel: 'twill be enough,
Bathed in your enemies' red blood, to right you.
For steel that once was mine (I mean of course
Just for the time I've had it in my keeping)
Should know how to avenge you.

ROSAURA. Now, in your name I gird it on once more
And on it I will swear to take revenge
Although my foe were even mightier.

CLOTALDO. Is he so powerful?

ROSAURA. So much so that . . .
Although I have no doubt in your discretion . . .
I say no more because I'd not estrange
Your clemency.

CLOTALDO. You would have won me had you told me, since
That would prevent me helping him.

Aside.

If only I could discover who he is!

ROSAURA. So that you'll not think that I value lightly
Such confidence, know that my adversary
Is no less than Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy.

CLOTALDO, *aside.* (I hardly can withstand the grief it gives me
For it is worse than aught I could imagine!
Let us inquire of him some further facts.)

Aloud.

If you were born a Muscovite, your ruler
Could never have affronted you. Go back
Home to your country. Leave this headstrong valour.
It will destroy you.

ROSAURA. Though he's been my prince,
I know that he has done me an affront.

CLOTALDO. Even though he slapped your face, that's no affront.

Aside.

O heavens!

ROSAURA. My insult was far deeper!

CLOTALDO. Tell it:

Since nothing I imagine could be deeper.

ROSAURA. Yes. I will tell it, yet, I know not why,
With such respect I look upon your face,
I venerate you with such true affection,
With such high estimation do I weigh you,
That I scarce dare to tell you—these men's clothes
Are an enigma, not what they appear.
So now you know. Judge if it's no affront
That here Astolfo comes to wed with Stella
Although betrothed to me. I've said enough.

Exeunt ROSAURA *and* CLARION.

CLOTALDO. Here! Listen! Wait! What mazed confusion!
It is a labyrinth wherein the reason
Can find no clue. My family honour's injured.
The enemy's all powerful. I'm a vassal
And she's a woman. Heavens! Show a path
Although I don't believe there is a way!
There's nought but evil bodings in the sky.
The whole world is a prodigy, say I.

ACT II

A Hall in the Royal Palace

Enter BASIL *and* CLOTALDO.

CLOTALDO. All has been done according to your orders.

BASIL. Tell me, Clotaldo, how it went?

CLOTALDO. Why, thus:

I took to Segismund a calming drug
Wherein are mixed herbs of especial virtue,
Tyrannous in their overpowering strength,
Which seize and steal and alienate man's gift
Of reasoning, thus making a live corpse
Of him. His violence evaporated
With all his faculties and senses too.
There is no need to prove it's possible
Because experience teaches us that medicine
Is full of natural secrets, that there is no
Animal, plant, or stone that has not got
Appointed properties. If human malice
Explores a thousand poisons which deal death,
Who then can doubt, that being so, that other
Poisons, less violent, cause only sleep?
But (leaving that doubt aside, as proven false
By every evidence) hear then the sequel:
I went down into Segismund's close prison
Bearing the drink wherein, with opium,
Henbane and poppies had been mixed. With him
I talked a little while of the humanities,
In which dumb Nature has instructed him,
The mountains and the heavens and the stars,
In whose divine academies he learned
Rhetoric from the birds and the wild creatures.
To lift his spirit to the enterprise
Which you require of him, I chose for subject
The swiftness of a stalwart eagle, who,

Deriding the base region of the wind,
Rises into the sphere reserved for fire,
A feathered lightning, an untethered comet.
Then I extolled such lofty flight and said:
"After all, he's the king of birds, and so
Takes precedence, by right, over the rest."
No more was needful for, in taking up
Majesty for his subject, he discoursed
With pride and high ambition, as his blood
Naturally moves, incites, and spurs him on
To grand and lofty things, and so he said
That in the restless kingdom of the birds
There should be those who swear obedience, too!
"In this, my miseries console me greatly,
Because if I'm a vassal here, it's only
By force, and not by choice. Of my own will
I would not yield in rank to any man."
Seeing that he grew furious—since this touched
The theme of his own griefs—I gave the potion
And scarcely had it passed from cup to breast
Before he yielded all his strength to slumber.
A chill sweat ran through all his limbs and veins.
Had I not known that this was mere feigned death
I would have thought him dead. Then came the men
To whom you've trusted this experiment,
Who placed him in a coach and brought him here
To your own rooms, where all things were prepared
In royalty and grandeur as befitting
His person. In your own bed they have laid him
Where, when the torpor wanes, they'll do him service
As if he were Your Majesty himself.
All has been done as you have ordered it,
And if I have obeyed you well, my lord,
I'd beg a favour (pardon me this freedom)—
To know what your intention is in thus
Transporting Segismund here to the palace.

BASIL. Your curiosity is just, Clotaldo,
And yours alone I'll satisfy. The star
Which governs Segismund, my son, in life,
Threatens a thousand tragedies and woes.

And now I wish to see whether the stars
(Which never lie—and having shown to us
So many cruel signs seem yet more certain)
May yet be brought to moderate their sentence,
Whether by prudence charmed or valour won,
For man does have the power to rule his stars.
I would examine this, bringing him here
Where he may know he is my son, and make
Trial of his talent. If magnanimously
He conquers and controls himself, he'll reign,
But if he proves a tyrant and is cruel,
Back to his chains he'll go. Now, you will ask,
Why did we bring him sleeping in this manner
For the experiment? I'll satisfy you,
Down to the smallest detail, with my answer.
If he knows that he is my son today,
And if tomorrow he should find himself
Once more reduced to prison, to misery,
He would despair entirely, knowing truly
Who, and whose son, he is. What consolation
Could he derive, then, from his lot? So I
Contrive to leave an exit for such grief,
By making him believe it was a dream.
By these means we may learn two things at once:
First, his character—for he will really be
Awake in all he thinks and all his actions;
Second, his consolation—which would be
(If he should wake in prison on the morrow,
Although he saw himself obeyed today)
That he might understand he had been dreaming,
And he will not be wrong, for in this world,
Clotaldo, all who live are only dreaming.

CLOTALDO. I've proofs enough to doubt of your success,
But now it is too late to remedy it.
From what I can make out, I think he's wakened
And that he's coming this way, by the sound.

BASIL. I shall withdraw. You, as his tutor, go
And guide him through his new bewilderments
By answering his queries with the truth.

CLOTALDO. You give me leave to tell the truth of it?

BASIL. Yes, because knowing all things, he may find
Known perils are the easiest to conquer.

Exit BASIL.

Enter CLARION.

CLARION. It cost me four whacks to get here so quickly.
I caught them from a red-haired halberdier
Sprouting a ginger beard over his livery,
And I've come to see what's going on.
No windows give a better view than those
A man brings with him in his head, not asking
For tickets of admission or paid seats,
Since at all functions, festivals, or feasts
He looks out with the same nice self-composure.

CLOTALDO, *aside.* Here's Clarion who's the servant of that person—
That trader in woes, importer from Poland
Of my disgrace.
Aloud.
Come, Clarion, what news?

CLARION. Item the first: encouraged by the fact
Your clemency's disposed to venge her insult,
Rosaura has resumed her proper clothing.

CLOTALDO. That's right: it's less indecorous and bold.

CLARION. Item: she's changed her name, and given out
That she's your niece. And now they've made so much
Of her that she's been raised to maid of honour
To the unique and only princess, Stella.

CLOTALDO. That's right: her honour stands to my account.

CLARION. Indeed she merely bides the time till you
Will settle all accounts about her honour.

CLOTALDO. Biding the time is wise, for in the end
It's Time that's going to settle all accounts!

CLARION. Item: that she's attended like a queen,
Because they take her for your niece. Item:
That I, who trudged along with her, am dying
Of hunger. Nobody remembers me,

Nor yet remembers that I'm like my name
And (should I sound my Clarion) could tell
All to the king and Stella and Astolfo.
For I am both a Clarion and a servant—
Two things which ill-accord with secrecy.
If silence should, by chance, let slip my hand,
Then there's a chorus which would fit me well:
"Dawn-breaking Clarion plays no better tune!"

CLOTALDO. You've reason for complaint. I'll satisfy it
If you'll but serve me . . .

CLARION. Hush, here's Segismund!

Enter musicians, singing, and servants arraying SEGISMUND, *who seems amazed.*

SEGISMUND. Heavens above! What's this that I am seeing?
I wonder at it all, with naught of fear!
But with a mighty doubt, I disbelieve it!
I?—in a sumptuous palace? I—encircled
With rich brocades and silks? I—overwhelmed
With servants in such brilliant liveries?
I—to awake in such a gorgeous bed?
I—in the middle of so many footmen
Who clothe me in rich garments? I'm awake:
It would be false to take this for a dream.
Am I not Segismund? Heavens! disabuse me
If I'm mistaken. Say, what could have happened
In my imagination while I slept—
That I should find myself in such a place?
But why should I worry, whatever it was?
I'll let myself be served and entertained—
Befall what may.

FIRST SERVANT, *aside to* SECOND SERVANT *and* CLARION.
He's very melancholy!

SECOND SERVANT. Who would not be, considering all that's happened
To him?

CLARION. I would not be!

SECOND SERVANT. You, speak to him.

FIRST SERVANT. Shall they begin to sing again?

SEGISMUND. Why, no,
I would not have them sing.

SECOND SERVANT. You're so distraught,
I wish you entertained.

SEGISMUND. My griefs are such
That no mere voices can amuse me now—
Only the martial music pleased my mind.

CLOTALDO. Your Highness, mighty prince, give me your hand
To kiss. I'm glad to be the first to offer
Obedience at your feet.

SEGISMUND, *aside*. This is Clotaldo.
How is it he, that tyrannised my thralldom,
Should now be treating me with such respect?
Aloud.
Tell me what's happening all round me here.

CLOTALDO. With the perplexities of your new state,
Your reason will encounter many doubts,
But I shall try to free you from them all
(If that may be) because you now must know
You are hereditary Prince of Poland.
If you have been withdrawn from public sight
Under restraint, it was in strict obedience
To Fate's inclemency, which will permit
A thousand woes to fall upon this empire
The moment that you wear the sovereign's crown.
But trusting that you'll prudently defeat
Your own malignant stars (since they can be
Controlled by magnanimity) you've been
Brought to this palace from the tower you knew
Even while your soul was yielded up to sleep.
My lord the king, your father, will be coming
To see you, and from him you'll learn the rest.

SEGISMUND. Then, vile, infamous traitor, what have I
To know more than this fact of who I am,
To show my pride and power from this day onward?
How have you played your country such a treason
As to deny me, against law and right,
The rank which is my own?

CLOTALDO. Unhappy me!

SEGISMUND. You were a traitor to the law, a flattering liar
To your own king, and cruel to myself.
And so the king, the law, and I condemn you,
After such fierce misfortunes as I've borne,
To die here by my hands.

SECOND SERVANT. My lord!

SEGISMUND. Let none
Get in the way. It is in vain. By God!
If you intrude, I'll throw you through the window.

SECOND SERVANT. Clotaldo, fly!

CLOTALDO. Alas, poor Segismund!
That you should show such pride, all unaware
That you are dreaming this.
Exit.

SECOND SERVANT. Take care! Take care!

SEGISMUND. Get out!

SECOND SERVANT. He was obeying the king's orders.

SEGISMUND. In an injustice, no one should obey
The king, and I'm his prince.

SECOND SERVANT. He had no right
To look into the rights and wrongs of it.

SEGISMUND. You must be mad to answer back at me.

CLARION. The prince is right. It's you who're in the wrong!

SECOND SERVANT. Who gave you right to speak?

CLARION. I simply took it.

SEGISMUND. And who are you?

CLARION. I am the go-between,
And in this art I think I am a master—
Since I'm the greatest jackanapes alive.

SEGISMUND, *to* CLARION.
In all this new world, you're the only one
Of the whole crowd who pleases me.

CLARION. Why, my lord,
I am the best pleaser of Segismunds
That ever was: ask anybody here!

Enter ASTOLFO.

ASTOLFO. Blessèd the day, a thousand times, my prince,
On which you landed here on Polish soil
To fill with so much splendour and delight
Our wide horizons, like the break of day!
For you arise as does the rising sun
Out of the rugged mountains, far away.
Shine forth then! And although so tardily
You bind the glittering laurels on your brows,
The longer may they last you still unwithered.

SEGISMUND. God save you.

ASTOLFO. That you do not know me, sir,
Is some excuse for greeting me without
The honour due to me. I am Astolfo
The Duke of Muscovy. You are my cousin.
We are of equal rank.

SEGISMUND. Then if I say,
"God save you," do I not display good feeling?
But since you take such note of who you are,
The next time that I see you, I shall say
"God save you *not*," if you would like that better.

SECOND SERVANT, *to* ASTOLFO.
Your Highness, make allowance for his breeding
Amongst the mountains. So he deals with all.

To SEGISMUND.
Astolfo does take precedence, Your Highness—

SEGISMUND. I have no patience with the way he came
To make his solemn speech, then put his hat on!

SECOND SERVANT. He's a grandee!

SEGISMUND. I'm grander than grandees!

SECOND SERVANT. For all that, there should be respect between you,
More than among the rest.

SEGISMUND. And who told you
To mix in my affairs?

Enter STELLA.

STELLA. Many times welcome to Your Royal Highness,

Now come to grace the dais that receives him
With gratitude and love. Long may you live
August and eminent, despite all snares,
And count your life by centuries, not years!

SEGISMUND, *aside to* CLARION.

Now tell me, who's this sovereign deity
At whose divinest feet Heaven lays down
The fleece of its aurora in the east?

CLARION. Sir, it's your cousin Stella.

SEGISMUND. She were better
Named "sun" than "star"!

To STELLA.

Though your speech was fair,
Just to have seen you and been conquered by you
Suffices for a welcome in itself.
To find myself so blessed beyond my merit
What can I do but thank you, lovely Stella,
For you could add more brilliance and delight
To the most blazing star? When you get up
What work is left the sun to do? O give me
Your hand to kiss, from out whose cup of snow
The solar horses drink the fires of day!

STELLA. Be a more gentle courtier.

ASTOLFO. I am lost.

SECOND SERVANT. I know Astolfo's hurt. I must divert him.

To SEGISMUND.

Sir, you should know that thus to woo so boldly
Is most improper. And, besides, Astolfo . . .

SEGISMUND. Did I not tell you not to meddle with me?

SECOND SERVANT. I only say what's just.

SEGISMUND. All this annoys me.
Nothing seems just to me but what I want.

SECOND SERVANT. Why, sir, I heard you say that no obedience
Or service should be lent to what's unjust.

SEGISMUND. You also heard me say that I would throw
Anyone who annoys me from that balcony.

SECOND SERVANT. With men like me you cannot do such things.

SEGISMUND. No? Well, by God, I'll have to prove it then!

He takes him in his arms and rushes out, followed by many, to return soon after.

ASTOLFO. What on earth have I seen? Can it be true?

STELLA. Go, all, and stop him!

SEGISMUND, *returning.* From the balcony
He's fallen in the sea. How strange it seems!

ASTOLFO. Measure your acts of violence, my lord:
From crags to palaces, the distance is
As great as that between man and the beasts.

SEGISMUND. Well, since you are for speaking out so boldly,
Perhaps one day you'll find that on your shoulders
You have no head to place your hat upon.

Exit ASTOLFO.

Enter BASIL.

BASIL. What's happened here?

SEGISMUND. Nothing at all. A man
Wearied me, so I threw him in the sea.

CLARION, *to* SEGISMUND. Be warned. That is the king.

BASIL. On the first day,
So soon, your coming here has cost a life?

SEGISMUND. He said I couldn't: so I won the bet.

BASIL. It grieves me, Prince, that, when I hoped to see you
Forewarned, and overriding Fate, in triumph
Over your stars, the first thing I should see
Should be such rigour—that your first deed here
Should be a grievous homicide. Alas!
With what love, now, can I offer my arms,
Knowing your own have learned to kill already?
Who sees a dirk, red from a mortal wound,
But does not fear it? Who can see the place
Soaking in blood, where late a man was murdered,
But even the strongest must respond to nature?
So in your arms seeing the instrument
Of death, and looking on a blood-soaked place,
I must withdraw myself from your embrace,
And though I thought in loving bonds to bind
Your neck, yet fear withholds me from your arms.

SEGISMUND. Without your loving arms I can sustain
Myself as usual. That such a loving father
Could treat me with such cruelty, could thrust me
From his side ungratefully, could rear me
As a wild beast, could hold me for a monster,
And pray that I were dead, that such a father
Withholds his arms from winding round my neck,
Seems unimportant, seeing that he deprives
Me of my very being as a man.

BASIL. Would to heaven I had never granted it,
For then I never would have heard your voice,
Nor seen your outrages.

SEGISMUND. Had you denied
Me being, then I would not have complained,
But that you took it from me when you gave it—
That is my quarrel with you. Though to give
Is the most singular and noble action,
It is the basest action if one gives
Only to take away.

BASIL. How well you thank me
For being raised from pauper to a prince!

SEGISMUND. In this what is there I should thank you for?
You tyrant of my will! If you are old
And feeble, and you die, what can you give me
More than what is my own by right of birth?
You are my father and my king, therefore
This grandeur comes to me by natural law.
Therefore, despite my present state, I'm not
Indebted to you, rather can I claim
Account of all those years in which you robbed me
Of life and being, liberty, and honour.
You ought to thank me that I press no claim
Since you're my debtor, even to bankruptcy.

BASIL. Barbarous and outrageous brute! The heavens
Have now fulfilled their prophecy: I call
Them to bear witness to your pride. Although
You know now, disillusioned, who you are,
And see yourself where you take precedence,
Take heed of this I say: be kind and humble

Since it may be that you are only dreaming,
Although it seems to you you're wide-awake.

Exit BASIL.

SEGISMUND. Can I perhaps be dreaming, though I seem
So wide-awake? No: I am not asleep,
Since I can touch, and realise what I
Have been before, and what I am today.
And if you even now relented, Father,
There'd be no cure since I know who I am
And you cannot, for all your sighs and groans,
Cheat me of my hereditary crown.
And if I was submissive in my chains
Before, then I was ignorant of what I am,
Which I now know (and likewise know that I
Am partly man but partly beast as well).

Enter ROSAURA *in woman's clothing.*

ROSAURA, *aside.* I came in Stella's train. I am afraid
Of meeting with Astolfo, since Clotaldo
Says he must not know who I am, not see me,
Because (he says) it touches on my honour.
And well I trust Clotaldo since I owe him
The safety of my life and honour both.

CLARION. What pleases you, and what do you admire
Most, of the things you've seen here in the world?

SEGISMUND. Why, nothing that I could not have foreseen—
Except the loveliness of women! Once,
I read among the books I had out there
That who owes God most grateful contemplation
Is Man: who is himself a tiny world.
But I think who owes God more grateful study
Is Woman—since she is a tiny heaven,
Having as much more beauty than a man
As heaven than earth. And even more, I say,
If she's the one that I am looking at.

ROSAURA, *aside.* That is the prince. I'll go.

SEGISMUND. Stop! Woman! Wait!
Don't join the sunset with the breaking day
By fading out so fast. If east and west

Should clash like that, the day would surely suffer
A syncope. But what is this I see?

ROSAURA. What I am looking at I doubt, and yet
Believe.

SEGISMUND, *aside*. This beauty I have seen before.

ROSAURA, *aside*. This pomp and grandeur I have seen before
Cooped in a narrow dungeon.

SEGISMUND, *aside*. I have found
My life at last.
Aloud.
Woman (for that sole word
Outsoars all wooing flattery of speech
From one that is a man), woman, who are you?
If even long before I ever saw you
You owed me adoration as your prince,
How much the more should you be conquered by me
Now I recall I've seen you once before!
Who are you, beauteous woman?

ROSAURA, *aside*. I'll pretend.
Aloud.
In Stella's train, I am a luckless lady.

SEGISMUND. Say no such thing. You are the sun from which
The minor star that's Stella draws its life,
Since she receives the splendour of your rays.
I've seen how in the kingdom of sweet odours,
Commander of the squadrons of the flowers,
The rose's deity presides, and is
Their empress by divine right of her beauty.
Among the precious stones which can be listed
In the academy of mines, I've seen
The diamond much preferred above the rest,
And crowned their emperor, for shining brightest.
In the revolving empire of the stars
The morning star takes pride among the others.
In their perfected spheres, when the sun calls
The planets to his council, he presides
And is the very oracle of day.
Then if among stars, gems, planet, and flowers

The fairest are exalted, why do you
Wait on a lesser beauty than yourself
Who are, in greater excellence and beauty,
The sun, the morning star, the diamond, and the rose!

Enter CLOTALDO, *who remains by the stage-curtain.*

CLOTALDO, *aside.*

I wish to curb him, since I brought him up.
But, what is this?

ROSAURA. I reverence your favour,
And yet reply, rhetorical, with silence,
For when one's mind is clumsy and untaught,
He answers best who does not speak at all.

SEGISMUND. Stay! Do not go! How can you wish to go
And leave me darkened by my doubts?

ROSAURA. Your Highness,
I beg your leave to go.

SEGISMUND. To go so rudely
Is not to beg my leave but just to take it.

ROSAURA. But if you will not grant it, I must take it.

SEGISMUND. That were to change my courtesy to rudeness.
Resistance is like venom to my patience.

ROSAURA. But even if this deadly, raging venom
Should overcome your patience, yet you dare not
And could not treat me with dishonour, sir.

SEGISMUND. Why, just to see then if I can, and dare to—
You'll make me lose the fear I bear your beauty,
Since the impossible is always tempting
To me. Why, only now I threw a man
Over this balcony who said I couldn't:
And so to find out if I can or not
I'll throw your honour through the window too.

CLOTALDO, *aside.*

He seems determined in this course. Oh, heavens!
What's to be done that for a second time
My honour's threatened by a mad desire?

ROSAURA. Then with good reason it was prophesied
Your tyranny would wreak this kingdom

Outrageous scandals, treasons, crimes, and deaths.
But what can such a creature do as you
Who are not even a man, save in the name—
Inhuman, barbarous, cruel, and unbending
As the wild beasts amongst whom you were nursed?

SEGISMUND. That you should not insult me in this way
I spoke to you most courteously, and thought
I'd thereby get my way; but if you curse me thus
Even when I am speaking gently, why,
By the living God, I'll really give you cause.
Ho there! Clear out, the lot of you, at once!
Leave her to me! Close all the doors upon us.
Let no one enter!

Exeunt CLARION *and other attendants.*

ROSAURA. I am lost . . . I warn you . . .

SEGISMUND. I am a tyrant and you plead in vain.

CLOTALDO, *aside.*
Oh, what a monstrous thing! I must restrain him
Even if I die for it.
Aloud.
Sir! Wait! Look here!

SEGISMUND. A second time you have provoked my anger,
You feeble, mad old man! Do you prize lightly
My wrath and rigour that you've gone so far?

CLOTALDO. Brought by the accents of her voice, I came
To tell you you must be more peaceful
If still you hope to reign, and warn you that
You should not be so cruel, though you rule—
Since this, perhaps, is nothing but a dream.

SEGISMUND. When you refer to disillusionment
You rouse me near to madness. Now you'll see,
Here as I kill you, if it's truth or dreaming!
As he tries to pull out his dagger, CLOTALDO *restrains him and throws himself on his knees before him.*

CLOTALDO. It's thus I'd save my life: and hope to do so—

SEGISMUND. Take your presumptuous hand from off this steel.

CLOTALDO. Till people come to hold your rage and fury
I shall not let you go.

ROSAURA. O heavens!

SEGISMUND. Loose it,

They struggle.

I say, or else—you interfering fool—
I'll crush you to your death in my strong arms!

ROSAURA. Come quickly! Here's Clotaldo being killed!

Exit.

ASTOLFO *appears as* CLOTALDO *falls on the floor, and the former stands between* SEGISMUND *and* CLOTALDO.

ASTOLFO. Why, what is this, most valiant prince? What? Staining
Your doughty steel in such old, frozen blood?
For shame! For shame! Sheathe your illustrious weapon!

SEGISMUND. When it is stained in his infamous blood!

ASTOLFO. At my feet here he has found sanctuary
And there he's safe, for it will serve him well.

SEGISMUND. Then serve me well by dying, for like this
I will avenge myself for your behaviour
In trying to annoy me first of all.

ASTOLFO. To draw in self-defence offends no king,
Though in his palace.

ASTOLFO *draws his sword and they fight.*

CLOTALDO, *to* ASTOLFO. Do not anger him!

Enter BASIL, STELLA, *and attendants.*

BASIL. Hold! Hold! What's this? Fighting with naked swords?

STELLA, *aside.* It is Astolfo! How my heart misgives me!

BASIL. Why, what has happened here?

ASTOLFO. Nothing, my Lord,
Since you've arrived.

Both sheathe their swords.

SEGISMUND. Much, though you *have* arrived.
I tried to kill the old man.

BASIL. Had you no
Respect for those white hairs?

CLOTALDO. Sire, since they're only
Mine, as you well can see, it does not matter!

SEGISMUND. It is in vain you'd have me hold white hairs
In such respect, since one day you may find
Your own white locks prostrated at my feet
For still I have not taken vengeance on you
For the foul way in which you had me reared.

Exit.

BASIL. Before that happens you will sleep once more
Where you were reared, and where what's happened may
Seem just a dream (being mere earthly glory).

All save ASTOLFO *and* STELLA *leave.*

ASTOLFO. How seldom does prediction fail, when evil!
How oft, foretelling good! Exact in harm,
Doubtful in benefit! Oh, what a great
Astrologer would be one who foretold
Nothing but harms, since there's no doubt at all
That they are always due! In Segismund
And me the case is illustrated clearly.
In him, crimes, cruelties, deaths, and disasters
Were well predicted, since they all came true.
But in my own case, to predict for me
(As I foresaw beholding rays which cast
The sun into the shade and outface heaven)
Triumphs and trophies, happiness and praise,
Was false—and yet was true: it's only just
That when predictions start with promised favours
They should end in disdain.

STELLA. I do not doubt
Your protestations are most heartfelt; only
They're not for me, but for another lady
Whose portrait you were wearing round your neck
Slung in a locket when you first arrived.
Since it is so, she only can deserve
These wooing flatteries. Let her repay you
For in affairs of love, flatteries and vows
Made for another are mere forged credentials.

ROSAURA *enters but waits by the curtain.*

ROSAURA, *aside.* Thanks be to God, my troubles are near ended!
To judge from what I see, I've naught to fear.

ASTOLFO. I will expel that portrait from my breast
To make room for the image of your beauty
And keep it there. For there where Stella is
Can be no room for shade, and where the sun is
No place for any star. I'll fetch the portrait.

Aside.

Forgive me, beautiful Rosaura, that,
When absent, men and women seldom keep
More faith than this.

Exit.

ROSAURA *comes forward.*

ROSAURA, *aside.* I could not hear a word. I was afraid
That they would see me.

STELLA. Oh, Astrea!

ROSAURA. My lady!

STELLA. I am delighted that you came. Because
To you alone would I confide a secret.

ROSAURA. Thereby you greatly honour me, your servant.

STELLA. Astrea, in the brief time I have known you
I've given you the latchkey of my will.
For that, and being who you are, I'll tell you
A secret which I've very often hidden
Even from myself.

ROSAURA. I am your slave.

STELLA. Then, briefly:
Astolfo, who's my cousin (the word cousin
Suffices, since some things are plainly said
Even by thinking them), is to wed me
If Fortune thus can wipe so many cares
Away with one great joy. But I am troubled
In that, the day he first came here, he carried
A portrait of a lady round his neck.
I spoke to him about it courteously.
He was most amiable, he loves me well,
And now he's gone for it. I am embarrassed
That he should give it me himself. Wait here,
And tell him to deliver it to you.

Do not say more. Since you're discreet and fair:
You'll surely know just what love is.

Exit.

ROSAURA. Great heavens!
How I wish that I did not! For who could be
So prudent or so skilful as would know
What to advise herself in such a case?
Lives there a person on this earth today
Who's more beset by the inclement stars,
Who has more cares besieging him, or fights
So many dire calamities at once?
What can I do in such bewilderment
Wherein it seems impossible to find
Relief or comfort? Since my first misfortune
No other thing has chanced or happened to me
But was a new misfortune. In succession
Inheritors and heirs of their own selves
(Just like the Phoenix, his own son and father)
Misfortunes reproduce themselves, are born,
And live by dying. In their sepulchre
The ashes they consume are hot forever.
A sage once said misfortunes must be cowards
Because they never dare to walk alone
But come in crowds. I say they are most valiant
Because they always charge so bravely on
And never turn their backs. Who charges with them
May dare all things because there is no fear
That they'll ever desert him; and I say it
Because in all my life I never once
Knew them to leave me, nor will they grow tired
Of me till, wounded and shot through and through
By Fate, I fall into the arms of death.
Alas, what can I do in this dilemma?
If I reveal myself, then old Clotaldo,
To whom I owe my life, may take offence,
Because he told me to await the cure
And mending of my honour in concealment.
If I don't tell Astolfo who I am
And he detects me, how can I dissimulate?

Since even if I say I am not I,
The voice, the language, and the eyes will falter,
Because the soul will tell them that they lie.
What shall I do? It is in vain to study
What I should do, when I know very well
That, whatsoever way I choose to act,
When the time comes I'll do as sorrow bids,
For no one has control over his sorrows.
Then since my soul dares not decide its actions
Let sorrow fill my cup and let my grief
Reach its extremity and, out of doubts
And vain appearances, once and for all
Come out into the light—and Heaven shield me!

Enter ASTOLFO.

ASTOLFO. Here, lady, is the portrait . . . but . . . great God!

ROSAURA. Why does Your Highness halt, and stare astonished?

ASTOLFO. Rosaura! Why, to see you here!

ROSAURA. Rosaura?
Sir, you mistake me for some other lady.
I am Astrea, and my humble station
Deserves no perturbation such as yours.

ASTOLFO. Enough of this pretence, Rosaura, since
The soul can never lie. Though as Astrea
I see you now, I love you as Rosaura.

ROSAURA. Not having understood Your Highness' meaning
I can make no reply except to say
That Stella (who might be the star of Venus)
Told me to wait here and to tell you from her
To give to me the portrait you were fetching
(Which seems a very logical request)
And I myself will take it to my lady.
Thus Stella bids: even the slightest things
Which do me harm are governed by some star.

ASTOLFO. Even if you could make a greater effort
How poorly you dissimulate, Rosaura!
Tell your poor eyes they do not harmonise
With your own voice, because they needs must jangle
When the whole instrument is out of tune.

You cannot match the falsehood of your words
With the sincerity of what you're feeling.

ROSAURA. All I can say is—that I want the portrait.

ASTOLFO. As you require a fiction, with a fiction
I shall reply. Go and tell Stella this:
That I esteem her so, it seems unworthy
Only to send the counterfeit to her
And that I'm sending her the original.
And you, take the original along with you,
Taking yourself to her.

ROSAURA. When a man starts
Forth on a definite task, resolved and valiant,
Though he be offered a far greater prize
Than what he seeks, yet he returns with failure
If he returns without his task performed.
I came to get that portrait. Though I bear
The original with me, of greater value,
I would return in failure and contempt
Without the copy. Give it me, Your Highness,
Since I cannot return without it.

ASTOLFO. But
If I don't give it you, how can you do so?

ROSAURA. Like this, ungrateful man! I'll take it from you.

She tries to wrest it from him.

ASTOLFO. It is in vain.

ROSAURA. By God, it shall not come
Into another woman's hands!

ASTOLFO. You're terrifying!

ROSAURA. And you're perfidious!

ASTOLFO. Enough, my dear
Rosaura!

ROSAURA. I, your dear? You lie, you villain!

They are both clutching the portrait.

Enter STELLA.

STELLA. Astrea and Astolfo, what does this mean?

ASTOLFO, *aside.* Here's Stella.

ROSAURA, *aside.* Love, grant me the strength to win
My portrait.
To STELLA.
If you want to know, my lady,
What this is all about, I will explain.
ASTOLFO, *to* ROSAURA, *aside.* What do you mean?
ROSAURA. You told me to await
Astolfo here and ask him for a portrait
On your behalf. I waited here alone
And as one thought suggests another thought,
Thinking of portraits, I recalled my own
Was here inside my sleeve. When one's alone,
One is diverted by a foolish trifle
And so I took it out to look at it.
It slipped and fell, just as Astolfo here,
Bringing the portrait of the other lady,
Came to deliver it to you as promised.
He picked my portrait up, and so unwilling
Is he to give away the one you asked for,
Instead of doing so, he seized upon
The other portrait which is mine alone
And will not give it back though I entreated
And begged him to return it. I was angry
And tried to snatch it back. That's it he's holding,
And you can see yourself if it's not mine.
STELLA. Let go the portrait.
She snatches it from him.
ASTOLFO. Madam!
STELLA. The draughtsman
Was not unkind to truth.
ROSAURA. Is it not mine?
STELLA. Why, who could doubt it?
ROSAURA. Ask him for the other.
STELLA. Here, take your own, Astrea. You may leave us.
ROSAURA, *aside.* Now I have got my portrait, come what will.
Exit.
STELLA. Now give me up the portrait that I asked for

Although I'll see and speak to you no more.
I do not wish to leave it in your power
Having been once so foolish as to beg it.

ASTOLFO, *aside.* Now how can I get out of this foul trap?

To STELLA.

Beautiful Stella, though I would obey you,
And serve you in all ways, I cannot give you
The portrait, since . . .

STELLA. You are a crude, coarse villain
And ruffian of a wooer. For the portrait—
I do not want it now, since, if I had it,
It would remind me I had asked you for it.

Exit.

ASTOLFO. Listen! Look! Wait! Let me explain!

Aside.

Oh, damn
Rosaura! How the devil did she get
To Poland for my ruin and her own?

The prison of Segismund in the tower

SEGISMUND *lying on the ground loaded with fetters and clothed in skins as before.* CLOTALDO, *two attendants, and* CLARION

CLOTALDO. Here you must leave him—since his reckless pride
Ends here today where it began.

ATTENDANT. His chain
I'll rivet as it used to be before.

CLARION. O Prince, you'd better not awake too soon
To find how lost you are, how changed your fate,
And that your fancied glory of an hour
Was but a shade of life, a flame of death!

CLOTALDO. For one who knows so well to wield his tongue
It's fit a worthy place should be provided
With lots of room and lots of time to argue.

This is the fellow that you have to seize

To the attendants.

And that's the room in which you are to lock him.

Points to the nearest cell.

CLARION. Why me?

CLOTALDO. Because a Clarion who knows
Too many secrets must be kept in gaol—
A place where even clarions are silent.

CLARION. Have I, by chance, wanted to kill my father
Or thrown an Icarus from a balcony?
Am I asleep or dreaming? To what end
Do you imprison me?

CLOTALDO. You're Clarion.

CLARION. Well, say I swear to be a cornet now,
A silent one, a wretched instrument . . . ?

They hustle him off.

CLOTALDO *remains.*

Enter BASIL, *wearing a mask.*

BASIL. Clotaldo.

CLOTALDO. Sire . . . and is it thus alone
Your Majesty has come?

BASIL. Vain curiosity
To see what happens here to Segismund.

CLOTALDO. See where he lies, reduced to misery!

BASIL. Unhappy prince! Born at a fatal moment!
Come waken him, now he has lost his strength
With all the opium he's drunk.

CLOTALDO. He's stirring
And talking to himself.

BASIL. What is he dreaming?
Let's listen now.

SEGISMUND. He who chastises tyrants
Is a most pious prince . . . Now let Clotaldo
Die by my hand . . . my father kiss my feet . . .

CLOTALDO. He threatens me with death!

BASIL. And me with insult
And cruelty.

CLOTALDO. He'd take my life away.

BASIL. And he'd humiliate me at his feet.

SEGISMUND, *still in a dream.*
Throughout the expanse of this world's theatre
I'll show my peerless valour, let my vengeance
Be wreaked, and the Prince Segismund be seen
To triumph—over his father . . . but, alas!
Awakening.
Where am I?

BASIL, *to* CLOTALDO. Since he must not see me here,
I'll listen further off. You know your cue.
Retires to one side.

SEGISMUND. Can this be I? Am I the same who, chained
And long imprisoned, rose to such a state?
Are you not still my sepulchre and grave,
You dismal tower? God! What things I have dreamed!

CLOTALDO, *aside.* Now I must go to him to disenchant him.
Aloud.
Awake already?

SEGISMUND. Yes: it was high time.

CLOTALDO. What? Do you have to spend all day asleep?
Since I was following the eagle's flight
With tardy discourse, have you still lain here
Without awaking?

SEGISMUND. No. Nor even now
Am I awake. It seems I've always slept,
Since, if I've dreamed what I've just seen and heard
Palpably and for certain, then I am dreaming
What I see now—nor is it strange I'm tired,
Since what I, sleeping, see, tells me that I
Was dreaming when I thought I was awake.

CLOTALDO. Tell me your dream.

SEGISMUND. That's if it *was* a dream!
No, I'll not tell you what I dreamed; but what
I lived and saw, Clotaldo, I *will* tell you.

I woke up in a bed that might have been
The cradle of the flowers, woven by Spring.
A thousand nobles, bowing, called me Prince,
Attiring me in jewels, pomp, and splendour.
My equanimity you turned to rapture
Telling me that I was the Prince of Poland.

CLOTALDO. I must have got a fine reward!

SEGISMUND. Not so:
For as a traitor, twice, with rage and fury,
I tried to kill you.

CLOTALDO. Such cruelty to me?

SEGISMUND. I was the lord of all, on all I took revenge,
Except I loved one woman . . . I believe
That *that* was true, though all the rest has faded.

Exit BASIL.

CLOTALDO, *aside*. I see the king was moved, to hear him speak.

Aloud.

Talking of eagles made you dream of empires,
But even in your dreams it's good to honour
Those who have cared for you and brought you up.
For Segismund, even in dreams, I warn you
Nothing is lost by trying to do good.

Exit.

SEGISMUND. That's true, and therefore let us subjugate
The bestial side, this fury and ambition,
Against the time when we may dream once more,
As certainly we shall, for this strange world
Is such that but to live here is to dream.
And now experience shows me that each man
Dreams what he is until he is awakened.
The king dreams he's a king and in this fiction
Lives, rules, administers with royal pomp.
Yet all the borrowed praises that he earns
Are written in the wind, and he is changed
(How sad a fate!) by death to dust and ashes.
What man is there alive who'd seek to reign
Since he must wake into the dream that's death.
The rich man dreams his wealth which is his care

And woe. The poor man dreams his sufferings.
He dreams who thrives and prospers in this life.
He dreams who toils and strives. He dreams who injures,
Offends, and insults. So that in this world
Everyone dreams the thing he is, though no one
Can understand it. I dream I am here,
Chained in these fetters. Yet I dreamed just now
I was in a more flattering, lofty station.
What is this life? A frenzy, an illusion,
A shadow, a delirium, a fiction.
The greatest good's but little, and this life
Is but a dream, and dreams are only dreams.

ACT III

The tower

Enter CLARION.

CLARION. I'm held in an enchanted tower, because
Of all I know. What would they do to me
For all I don't know, since—for all I know—
They're killing me by starving me to death.
O that a man so hungry as myself
Should live to die of hunger while alive!
I am so sorry for myself that others
May well say "I can well believe it," since
This silence ill accords with my name "Clarion",
And I just can't shut up. My fellows here?
Spiders and rats—fine feathered songsters those!
My head's still ringing with a dream of fifes
And trumpets and a lot of noisy humbug
And long processions as of penitents
With crosses, winding up and down, while some
Faint at the sight of blood besmirching others.
But now to tell the truth, I am in prison.
For knowing secrets, I am kept shut in,
Strictly observed as if I were a Sunday,
And feeling sadder than a Tuesday, where
I neither eat nor drink. They say a secret
Is sacred and should be as strictly kept
As any saint's day on the calendar.
Saint Secret's Day for me's a working day
Because I'm never idle then. The penance
I suffer here is merited, I say:
Because being a lackey, I was silent,
Which, in a servant, is a sacrilege.

A noise of drums and trumpets.

FIRST SOLDIER, *within.*
Here is the tower in which he is imprisoned.
Smash in the door and enter, everybody!

CLARION. Great God! They've come to seek me. That is certain
Because they say I'm here. What can they want?

Enter several soldiers.

FIRST SOLDIER. Go in.

SECOND SOLDIER. He's here!

CLARION. No, he's not here!

ALL THE SOLDIERS. Our lord!

CLARION. What, are they drunk?

FIRST SOLDIER. You are our rightful prince.
We do not want and never shall allow
A stranger to supplant our trueborn prince.
Give us your feet to kiss!

ALL THE SOLDIERS. Long live the prince!

CLARION. Bless me, if it's not real! In this strange kingdom
It seems the custom, everyday, to take
Some fellow and to make him prince and then
Shut him back in this tower. That *must* be it!
So I must play my role.

ALL THE SOLDIERS. Give us your feet.

CLARION. I can't. They're necessary. After all
What sort of use would be a footless prince?

SECOND SOLDIER. All of us told your father, as one man,
We want no prince of Muscovy but you!

CLARION. You weren't respectful to my father? Shame!

FIRST SOLDIER. It was our loyalty that made us tell him.

CLARION. If it was loyalty, you have my pardon.

SECOND SOLDIER. Restore your empire. Long live Segismund!

CLARION, *aside*. That is the name they seem to give to all
These counterfeited princes.

Enter SEGISMUND.

SEGISMUND. Who called Segismund?

CLARION, *aside*. I seem to be a hollow sort of prince.

FIRST SOLDIER. Which of you's Segismund?

SEGISMUND. I am.

SECOND SOLDIER, *to* CLARION. Then, why,

Rash fool, did you impersonate the prince
Segismund?

CLARION. What? I, Segismund? Yourselves
Be-Segismunded me without request.
All yours was both the rashness and the folly.

FIRST SOLDIER. Prince Segismund, whom we acclaim our lord,
Your father, great King Basil, in his fear
That heaven would fulfil a prophecy
That one day he would kneel before your feet
Wishes now to deprive you of the throne
And give it to the Duke of Muscovy.
For this he called a council, but the people
Discovered his design and knowing, now,
They have a native king, will have no stranger.
So scorning the fierce threats of destiny,
We've come to seek you in your very prison,
That aided by the arms of the whole people,
We may restore you to the crown and sceptre,
Taking them from the tyrant's grasp. Come, then:
Assembling here, in this wide desert region,
Hosts of plebeians, bandits, and freebooters,
Acclaim you king. Your liberty awaits you!
Hark to its voice!

Shouts within.

Long life to Segismund!

SEGISMUND. Once more, you heavens will that I should dream
Of grandeur, once again, 'twixt doubts and shades,
Behold the majesty of pomp and power
Vanish into the wind, once more you wish
That I should taste the disillusion and
The risk by which all human power is humbled,
Of which all human power should live aware.
It must not be. I'll not be once again
Put through my paces by my fortune's stars.
And since I know this life is all a dream,
Depart, vain shades, who feign, to my dead senses,
That you have voice and body, having neither!
I want no more feigned majesty, fantastic
Display, nor void illusions, that one gust

Can scatter like the almond tree in flower,
Whose rosy buds, without advice or warning,
Dawn in the air too soon and then, as one,
Are all extinguished, fade, and fall, and wither
In the first gust of wind that comes along!
I know you well. I know you well by now.
I know that all that happens in yourselves
Happens as in a sleeping man. For me
There are no more delusions and deceptions
Since I well know this life is all a dream.

SECOND SOLDIER. If you think we are cheating, just sweep
Your gaze along these towering peaks, and see
The hosts that wait to welcome and obey you.

SEGISMUND. Already once before I've seen such crowds
Distinctly, quite as vividly as these:
And yet it was a dream.

SECOND SOLDIER. No great event
Can come without forerunners to announce it
And this is the real meaning of your dream.

SEGISMUND. Yes, you say well. It was the fore-announcement
And just in case it was correct, my soul,
(Since life's so short) let's dream the dream anew!
But it must be attentively, aware
That we'll awake from pleasure in the end.
Forewarned of that, the shock's not so abrupt,
The disillusion's less. Evils anticipated
Lose half their sting. And armed with this precaution—
That power, even when we're sure of it, is borrowed
And must be given back to its true owner—
We can risk anything and dare the worst.
Subjects, I thank you for your loyalty.
In me you have a leader who will free you,
Bravely and skilfully, from foreign rule.
Sound now to arms, you'll soon behold my valour.
Against my father I must march and bring
Truth from the stars. Yes: he must kneel to me.

Aside.

But yet, since I may wake before he kneels,
Perhaps I'd better not proclaim what may not happen.

ALL. Long live Segismund!

Enter CLOTALDO.

CLOTALDO. Gracious heavens! What is
This riot here?

SEGISMUND. Clotaldo!

CLOTALDO. Sir!

Aside.

He'll prove
His cruelty on me.

CLARION. I bet he throws him
Over the mountain.

CLOTALDO. At your royal feet
I kneel, knowing my penalty is death.

SEGISMUND. Rise, rise, my foster father, from the ground,
For you must be the compass and the guide
In which I trust. You brought me up, and I
Know what I owe your loyalty. Embrace me!

CLOTALDO. What's that you say?

SEGISMUND. I know I'm in a dream,
But I would like to act well, since good actions,
Even in a dream, are not entirely lost.

CLOTALDO. Since doing good is now to be your glory,
You will not be offended that I too
Should do what's right. You march against your father!
I cannot give you help against my king.
Here at your feet, my lord, I plead for death.

SEGISMUND, *aloud.* Villain!

Aside.

But let us suffer this annoyance.
Though my rage would slay him, yet he's loyal.
A man does not deserve to die for that.
How many angry passions does this leash
Restrain in me, this curb of knowing well
That I must wake and find myself alone!

SECOND SOLDIER. All this fine talk, Clotaldo, is a cruel
Spurn of the public welfare. We are loyal
Who wish our own prince to reign over us.

CLOTALDO. Such loyalty, after the king were dead,
Would honour you. But while the king is living
He is our absolute, unquestioned lord.
There's no excuse for subjects who oppose
His sovereignty in arms.

FIRST SOLDIER. We'll soon see well
Enough, Clotaldo, what this loyalty
Is worth.

CLOTALDO. You would be better if you had some.
It is the greatest prize.

SEGISMUND. Peace, peace, I pray you.

CLOTALDO. My lord!

SEGISMUND. Clotaldo, if your feelings
Are truly thus, go you, and serve the king;
That's prudence, loyalty, and common sense.
But do not argue here with anyone
Whether it's right or wrong, for every man
Has his own honour.

CLOTALDO. Humbly I take my leave.

Exit.

SEGISMUND. Now sound the drums and march in rank and order
Straight to the palace.

ALL. Long live Segismund!

SEGISMUND. Fortune, we go to reign! Do not awake me
If I am dreaming! Do not let me fall
Asleep if it is true! To act with virtue
Is what matters, since if this proves true,
That truth's sufficient reason in itself;
If not, we win us friends against the time
When we at last awake.

A room in the royal palace

Enter BASIL *and* ASTOLFO.

BASIL. Whose prudence can rein in a bolting horse?
Who can restrain a river's pride, in spate?
Whose valour can withstand a crag dislodged
And hurtling downwards from a mountain peak?
All these are easier by far than to hold back
A crowd's proud fury, once it has been roused.
It has two voices, both proclaiming war,
And you can hear them echoing through the mountains,
Some shouting "Segismund," others "Astolfo."
The scene I set for swearing of allegiance
Lends but an added horror to this strife:
It has become the back cloth to a stage
Where Fortune plays out tragedies in blood.

ASTOLFO. My lord, forget the happiness and wealth
You promised me from your most blessèd hand.
If Poland, which I hope to rule, refuses
Obedience to my right, grudging me honour,
It is because I've got to earn it first.
Give me a horse, that I with angry pride
May match the thunder in my voice and ride
To strike, like lightning, terror far and wide.

Exit ASTOLFO.

BASIL. No remedy for what's infallible!
What is foreseen is perilous indeed!
If something has to be, there's no way out;
In trying to evade it, you but court it.
This law is pitiless and horrible.
Thinking one can evade the risk, one meets it:
My own precautions have been my undoing,
And I myself have quite destroyed my kingdom.

Enter STELLA.

STELLA. If you, my lord, in person do not try

To curb the vast commotion that has started
In all the streets between the rival factions,
You'll see your kingdom, swamped in waves of crimson,
Swimming in its own blood, with nothing left
But havoc, dire calamity, and woe.
So frightful is the damage to your empire
That, seen, it strikes amazement; heard, despair.
The sun's obscured, the very winds are hindered.
Each stone is a memorial to the dead.
Each flower springs from a grave while every building
Appears a mausoleum, and each soldier
A premature and walking skeleton.

Enter CLOTALDO.

CLOTALDO. Praise be to God, I reach your feet alive!

BASIL. Clotaldo! What's the news of Segismund?

CLOTALDO. The crowd, a headstrong monster blind with rage,
Entered his dungeon tower and set him free.
He, now exalted for the second time,
Conducts himself with valour, boasting how
He will bring down the truth out of the stars.

BASIL. Give me a horse, that I myself, in person,
May vanquish such a base, ungrateful son!
For I, in the defence of my own crown,
Shall do by steel what science failed to do.

Exit.

STELLA. I'll be Bellona to your Sun, and try
To write my name next yours in history.
I'll ride as though I flew on outstretched wings
That I may vie with Pallas.

Exit.

Enter ROSAURA, *holding back* CLOTALDO.

ROSAURA. I know that all is war, Clotaldo, yet
Although your valour calls you to the front,
First hear me out. You know quite well that I
Arrived in Poland poor and miserable,
Where, shielded by your valour, I found mercy.
You told me to conceal myself, and stay
Here in the palace, hiding from Astolfo.

He saw me in the end, and so insulted
My honour that (although he saw me clearly)
He nightly speaks with Stella in the garden.
I have the key to it and I will show you
How you can enter there and end my cares.
Thus bold, resolved, and strong, you can recover
My honour, since you're ready to avenge me
By killing him.

CLOTALDO. It's true that I intended,
Since first I saw you (having heard your tale)
With my own life to rectify your wrongs.
The first step that I took was bid you dress
According to your sex, for fear Astolfo
Might see you as you were, and deem you wanton.
I was devising how we could recover
Your honour (so much did it weigh on me)
Even though we had to kill him. (A wild plan—
Though since he's not my king, I would not flinch
From killing him.) But then, when suddenly
Segismund tried to kill me, it was he
Who saved my life with his surpassing valour.
Consider: how can I requite Astolfo
With death for giving me my life so bravely,
And when my soul is full of gratitude?
So torn between the two of you I stand—
Rosaura, whose life I saved, and Astolfo,
Who saved my life. What's to be done? Which side
To take, and whom to help, I cannot judge.
What I owe you in that I gave you life
I owe to him in that he gave me life.
And so there is no course that I can take
To satisfy my love. I am a person
Who has to act, yet suffer either way.

ROSAURA. I should not have to tell so brave a man
That if it is nobility to give,
It's baseness to receive. That being so
You owe no gratitude to him, admitting
That it was he who gave you life, and you
Who gave me life, since he forced you to take

A meaner role, and through me you assumed
A generous role. So you should side with me:
My cause is so far worthier than his own
As giving is than taking.

CLOTALDO. Though nobility
Is with the giver, it is gratitude
That dwells with the receiver. As a giver
I have the name of being generous:
Then grant me that of being grateful too
And let me earn the title and be grateful,
As I am liberal, giving or receiving.

ROSAURA. You granted me my life, at the same time
Telling me it was worthless, since dishonoured,
And therefore was no life. Therefore from you
I have received no life at all. And since
You should be liberal first and grateful after
(Since so you said yourself) I now entreat you
Give me the life, the life you never gave me!
As giving magnifies the most, give first
And then be grateful after, if you will!

CLOTALDO. Won by your argument, I will be liberal.
Rosaura, I shall give you my estate
And you shall seek a convent, there to live.
This measure is a happy thought, for, see,
Fleeing a crime, you find a sanctuary.
For when the empire's threatened with disasters
And is divided thus, I, born a noble,
Am not the man who would augment its woes.
So with this remedy which I have chosen
I remain loyal to the kingdom, generous
To you, and also grateful to Astolfo.
And thus I choose the course that suits you best.
Were I your father, what could I do more?

ROSAURA. Were you my father, then I would accept
The insult. Since you are not, I refuse.

CLOTALDO. What do you hope to do then?

ROSAURA. Kill the duke!

CLOTALDO. A girl who never even knew her father
Armed with such courage?

ROSAURA. Yes.
CLOTALDO. What spurs you on?
ROSAURA. My good name.
CLOTALDO. In Astolfo you will find . . .
ROSAURA. My honour rides on him and strikes him down!
CLOTALDO. Your king, too, Stella's husband!
ROSAURA. Never, never
Shall that be, by almighty God, I swear!
CLOTALDO. Why, this is madness!
ROSAURA. Yes it is!
CLOTALDO. Restrain it.
ROSAURA. That I cannot.
CLOTALDO. Then you are lost forever!
ROSAURA. I know it!
CLOTALDO. Life and honour both together!
ROSAURA. I well believe it!
CLOTALDO. What do you intend?
ROSAURA. My death.
CLOTALDO. This is despair and desperation.
ROSAURA. It's honour.
CLOTALDO. It is nonsense.
ROSAURA. It is valour.
CLOTALDO. It's frenzy.
ROSAURA. Yes, it's anger! Yes, it's fury!
CLOTALDO. In short you cannot moderate your passion?
ROSAURA. No.
CLOTALDO. Who is there to help you?
ROSAURA. I, myself.
CLOTALDO. There is no cure?
ROSAURA. There is no cure!
CLOTALDO. Think well
If there's not some way out . . .
ROSAURA. Some other way
To do away with me . . .

Exit.

CLOTALDO. If you are lost,
My daughter, let us both be lost together!

In the country

Enter SEGISMUND *clothed in skins. Soldiers marching.* CLARION. *Drums beating.*

SEGISMUND. If Rome, today, could see me here, renewing
Her olden triumphs, she might laugh to see
A wild beast in command of mighty armies,
A wild beast, to whose fiery aspirations
The firmament were all too slight a conquest!
But stoop your flight, my spirit. Do not thus
Be puffed to pride by these uncertain plaudits
Which, when I wake, will turn to bitterness
In that I won them only to be lost.
The less I value them, the less I'll miss them.

A trumpet sounds.

CLARION. Upon a rapid courser (pray excuse me,
Since if it comes to mind I must describe it)
In which it seems an atlas was designed
Since if its body is earth, its soul is fire
Within its breast, its foam appears the sea,
The wind its breath, and chaos its condition,
Since in its soul, its foam, its breath and flesh,
It seems a monster of fire, earth, sea, and wind,
Upon the horse, all of a patchwork colour,
Dappled, and rushing forward at the will
Of one who plies the spur, so that it flies
Rather than runs—see how a woman rides
Boldly into your presence.[1]

SEGISMUND. Her light blinds me.

CLARION. Good God! Why, here's Rosaura!

[1] Clarion's speech is a parody of exaggerated style—including Calderón's. [R.C.]

SEGISMUND. It is heaven
That has restored her to my sight once more.

Enter ROSAURA *with sword and dagger in riding costume.*

ROSAURA. Generous Segismund, whose majesty
Heroically rises in the lustre
Of his great deeds out of his night of shadows,
And as the greatest planet, in the arms
Of his aurora, lustrously returns
To plants and roses, over hills and seas,
When, crowned with gold, he looks abroad, dispersing
Radiance, flashing his rays, bathing the summits,
And broidering the fringes of the foam,
So may you dawn upon the world, bright sun
Of Poland, that a poor unhappy woman
May fall before your feet and beg protection
Both as a woman and unfortunate—
Two things that must oblige you, sire, as one
Who prize yourself as valiant, each of them
More than suffices for your chivalry.
Three times you have beheld me now, three times
Been ignorant of who I am, because
Three times you saw me in a different clothing.
The first time you mistook me for a man,
Within that rigorous prison, where your hardships
Made mine seem pleasure. Next time, as a woman,
You saw me, when your pomp and majesty
Were as a dream, a phantasm, a shade.
The third time is today when, as a monster
Of both the sexes, in a woman's costume
I bear a soldier's arms. But to dispose you
The better to compassion, hear my story.
My mother was a noble in the court
Of Moscow, who, since most unfortunate,
Must have been beautiful. Then came a traitor
And cast his eyes on her (I do not name him,
Not knowing who he is). Yet I deduce
That he was valiant too from my own valour,
Since he gave form to me—and I could wish
I had been born in pagan times, that I might

Persuade myself he was some god of those
Who rain in showers of gold, turn into swans
Or bulls, for Danaës, Ledas, or Europas.
That's strange: I thought I was just rambling on
By telling old perfidious myths, yet find
I've told you how my mother was cajoled.
Oh, she was beautiful as no one else
Has been, but was unfortunate like all.
He swore to wed her (that's an old excuse)
And this trick reached so nearly to her heart
That thought must weep, recalling it today.
The tyrant left her only with his sword
As Aeneas left Troy. I sheathed its blade here
Upon my thigh, and I will bare it too
Before the ending of this history.
Out of this union, this poor link which neither
Could bind the marriage nor handcuff the crime,
Myself was born, her image and her portrait,
Not in her beauty, but in her misfortune,
For mine's the same. That's all I need to say.
The most that I can tell you of myself
Is that the man who robbed me of the spoils
And trophies of my honour is Astolfo.
Alas! to name him my heart rages so
(As hearts will do when men name enemies).
Astolfo was my faithless and ungrateful
Lord, who (quite forgetful of our happiness,
Since of a past love even the memory fades)
Came here to claim the throne and marry Stella
For she's the star who rises as I set.
It's hard to credit that a star should sunder
Lovers the stars had made conformable!
So hurt was I, so villainously cheated,
That I became mad, brokenhearted, sick,
Half wild with grief, and like to die, with all
Hell's own confusion ciphered on my mind
Like Babel's incoherence. Mutely I told
My griefs (since woes and griefs declare themselves
Better than can the mouth, by their effects),
When, with my mother (we were by ourselves),

She broke the prison of my pent-up sorrows
And from my breast they all rushed forth in troops.
I felt no shyness, for in knowing surely
That one to whom one's errors are recounted
Has also been an ally in her own,
One finds relief and rest, since bad example
Can sometimes serve for a good purpose too.
She heard my plaint with pity, and she tried
To palliate my sorrows with her own.
How easily do judges pardon error
When they've offended too! An example,
A warning, in herself, she did not trust
To idleness, or the slow cure of time,
Nor try to find a remedy for her honour
In my misfortunes, but, with better counsel,
She bade me follow him to Poland here
And with prodigious gallantry persuade him
To pay the debt to honour that he owes me.
So that it would be easier to travel,
She bade me don male clothing, and took down
This ancient sword which I am wearing now.
Now it is time that I unsheathe the blade
As I was bid, for, trusting in its sign,
She said: "Depart to Poland, show this sword
That all the nobles may behold it well,
And it may be that one of them will take
Pity on you, and counsel you, and shield you."
I came to Poland and, you will remember,
Entered your cave. You looked at me in wonder.
Clotaldo passionately took my part
To plead for mercy to the king, who spared me,
Then, when he heard my story, bade me change
Into my own clothes and attend on Stella,
There to disturb Astolfo's love and stop
Their marriage. Again you saw me in woman's dress
And were confused by the discrepancy.
But let's pass to what's new: Clotaldo, now
Persuaded that Astolfo must, with Stella,
Come to the throne, dissuades me from my purpose,
Against the interests of my name and honour.

But seeing you, O valiant Segismund,
Are claiming your revenge, now that the heavens
Have burst the prison of your rustic tower,
(Wherein you were the tiger of your sorrows,
The rock of sufferings and direful pains)
And sent you forth against your sire and country,
I come to aid you, mingling Dian's silks
With the hard steel of Pallas. Now, strong Captain,
It well behoves us both to stop this marriage—
Me, lest my promised husband should be wed,
You, lest, when their estates are joined, they weigh
More powerfully against your victory.
I come, as a mere woman, to persuade you
To right my shame; but, as a man, I come
To help you battle for your crown. As woman,
To melt your heart, here at your feet I fall;
But, as a man, I come to serve you bravely
Both with my person and my steel, and thus,
If you today should woo me as a woman,
Then I should have to kill you as a man would
In honourable service of my honour;
Since I must be three things today at once—
Passionate, to persuade you: womanly,
To ply you with my woes: manly, to gain
Honour in battle.

SEGISMUND. Heavens! If it is true I'm dreaming,
Suspend my memory, for in a dream
So many things could not occur. Great heavens!
If I could only come free of them all!
Or never think of any! Who ever felt
Such grievous doubts? If I but dreamed that triumph
In which I found myself, how can this woman
Refer me to such sure and certain facts?
Then all of it was true and not a dream.
But if it be the truth, why does my past life
Call it a dream? This breeds the same confusion.
Are dreams and glories so alike, that fictions
Are held for truths, realities for lies?
Is there so little difference in them both
That one should question whether what one sees

And tastes is true or false? What? Is the copy
So near to the original that doubt
Exists between them? Then if that is so,
And grandeur, power, majesty, and pomp,
Must all evaporate like shades at morning,
Let's profit by it, this time, to enjoy
That which we only can enjoy in dreams.
Rosaura's in my power: my soul adores her beauty.
Let's take the chance. Let love break every law
On which she has relied in coming here
And kneeling, trustful, prostrate at my feet.
This is a dream. If so, dream pleasures now
Since they must turn to sorrows in the end!
But with my own opinions, I begin
Once again to convince myself. Let's think.
If it is but vainglory and a dream,
Who for mere human vainglory would lose
True glory? What past blessing is not merely
A dream? Who has known heroic glories,
That deep within himself, as he recalls them,
Has never doubted that they might be dreams?
But if this all should end in disenchantment,
Seeing that pleasure is a lovely flame
That's soon converted into dust and ashes
By any wind that blows, then let us seek
That which endures in thrifty, lasting fame
In which no pleasures sleep, nor grandeurs dream.
Rosaura's without honour. In a prince
It's worthier to restore it than to steal it.
I shall restore it, by the living God,
Before I win my throne! Let's shun the danger
And fly from the temptation which is strong!
Then sound to arms!

To a soldier.

Today I must give battle before darkness
Buries the rays of gold in green-black waves!

ROSAURA. My lord! Alas, you stand apart, and offer
No word of pity for my plight. How is it

You neither hear nor see me nor even yet
Have turned your face on me?

SEGISMUND. Rosaura, for your honour's sake
I must be cruel to you, to be kind.
My voice must not reply to you because
My honour must reply to you. I am silent
Because my deeds must speak to you alone.
I do not look at you since, in such straits,
Having to see your honour is requited,
I must not see your beauty.
Exit with soldiers.

ROSAURA. What strange enigma's this? After such trouble
Still to be treated with more doubtful riddles!
Enter CLARION.

CLARION. Madam, may you be visited just now?

ROSAURA. Why, Clarion, where have you been all this time?

CLARION. Shut in the tower, consulting cards
About my death: "to be or not to be."
And it was a near thing.

ROSAURA. Why?

CLARION. Because I know
The secret who you are: in fact, Clotaldo . . .
Drums.
But hush what noise is that?

ROSAURA. What can it be?

CLARION. From the beleaguered palace a whole squadron
Is charging forth to harry and defeat
That of fierce Segismund.

ROSAURA. Why, what a coward
Am I, not to be at his side, the terror
And scandal of the world, while such fierce strife
Presses all round in lawless anarchy.
Exit.

VOICES OF SOME. Long live our king!

VOICES OF OTHERS. Long live our liberty!

CLARION. Long live both king and liberty. Yes, live!
And welcome to them both! I do not worry.
In all this pother, I behave like Nero
Who never grieved at what was going on.
If I had anything to grieve about
It would be me, myself. Well hidden here,
Now, I can watch the sport that's going on.
This place is safe and hidden between crags,
And since death cannot find me here, two figs for death!

He hides. Drums and the clash of arms are heard.

Enter BASIL, CLOTALDO, *and* ASTOLFO, *fleeing.*

BASIL. Was ever king so hapless as myself
Or father more ill used?

CLOTALDO. Your beaten army
Rush down, in all directions, in disorder.

ASTOLFO. The traitors win!

BASIL. In battles such as these
Those on the winning side are ever "loyal,"
And traitors the defeated. Come, Clotaldo,
Let's flee from the inhuman cruelty
Of my fierce son!

Shots are fired within. CLARION *falls wounded.*

CLARION. Heavens, save me!

ASTOLFO. Who is this
Unhappy soldier bleeding at our feet?

CLARION. I am a most unlucky man who, wishing
To guard myself from death, have sought it out
By fleeing from it. Shunning it, I found it,
Because, to death, no hiding-place is secret.
So you can argue that whoever shuns it
Most carefully runs into it the quickest.
Turn, then, once more into the thick of battle:
There is more safety there amidst the fire
And clash of arms than here on this secluded
Mountain, because no hidden path is safe
From the inclemency of Fate; and so,
Although you flee from death, yet you may find it
Quicker than you expect, if God so wills.

He falls dead.

BASIL. "If God so wills" . . . With what strange eloquence
This corpse persuades our ignorance and error
To better knowledge, speaking from the mouth
Of its fell wound, where the red liquid flowing
Seems like a bloody tongue which teaches us
That the activities of man are vain
When they are pitted against higher powers.
For I, who wished to liberate my country
From murder and sedition, gave it up
To the same ills from which I would have saved it.

CLOTALDO. Though Fate, my lord, knows every path, and finds
Him whom it seeks even in the midst of crags
And thickets, it is not a Christian judgment
To say there is no refuge from its fury.
A prudent man can conquer Fate itself.
Though you are not exempted from misfortune,
Take action to escape it while you can!

ASTOLFO. Clotaldo speaks as one mature in prudence,
And I as one in valour's youthful prime.
Among the thickets of this mount is hidden
A horse, the very birth of the swift wind.
Flee on him, and I'll guard you in the rear.

BASIL. If it is God's will I should die, or if
Death waits here for my coming, I will seek
Him out today, and meet him face to face.

Enter SEGISMUND, STELLA, ROSAURA, *soldiers, and their train.*

A SOLDIER. Amongst the thickets of this mountain
The king is hiding.

SEGISMUND. Seek him out at once!
Leave no foot of the summit unexplored
But search from stem to stem and branch to branch!

CLOTALDO. Fly, sir!

BASIL. What for?

ASTOLFO. What do you mean to do?

BASIL. Astolfo, stand aside!

CLOTALDO. What is your wish?

BASIL. To take a cure I've needed for sometime.

To SEGISMUND.

If you have come to seek me, here I am.

Kneeling.

Your father, prince, kneels humbly at your feet.
The white snow of my hair is now your carpet.
Tread on my neck and trample on my crown!
Lay low and drag my dignity in dust!
Take vengeance on my honour! Make a slave
Of me and, after all I've done to thwart them,
Let Fate fulfil its edict and claim homage
And Heaven fulfil its oracles at last!

SEGISMUND. Illustrious court of Poland, who have been
The witnesses of such unwonted wonders,
Attend to me, and hear your prince speak out.
What Heaven decrees and God writes with his finger
(Whose prints and ciphers are the azure leaves
Adorned with golden lettering of the stars)
Never deceives nor lies. They only lie
Who seek to penetrate the mystery
And, having reached it, use it to ill purpose.
My father, who is here to evade the fury
Of my proud nature, made me a wild beast:
So, when I, by my birth of gallant stock,
My generous blood, and inbred grace and valour,
Might well have proved both gentle and forbearing,
The very mode of life to which he forced me,
The sort of bringing up I had to bear
Sufficed to make me savage in my passions.
What a strange method of restraining them!
If one were to tell any man: "One day
You will be killed by an inhuman monster,"
Would it be the best method he could choose
To wake that monster when it was asleep?
Or if they told him: "That sword which you're wearing
Will be your death," what sort of cure were it
To draw it forth and aim it at his breast?
Or if they told him: "Deep blue gulfs of water
Will one day be your sepulchre and grave

Beneath a silver monument of foam,"
He would be mad to hurl himself in headlong
When the sea highest heaved its showy mountains
And crystalline sierras plumed with spray.
The same has happened to the king as to him
Who wakes a beast which threatens death, to him
Who draws a naked sword because he fears it,
To him who dives into the stormy breakers.
Though my ferocious nature (hear me now)
Was like a sleeping beast, my inborn rage
A sheathèd sword, my wrath a quiet ripple,
Fate should not be coerced by man's injustice—
This rouses more resentment. So it is
That he who seeks to tame his fortune must
Resort to moderation and to measure.
He who foresees an evil cannot conquer it
Thus in advance, for though humility
Can overcome it, this it can do only
When the occasion's there, for there's no way
To dodge one's fate and thus evade the issue.
Let this strange spectacle serve as example—
This prodigy, this horror, and this wonder,
Because it is no less than one, to see,
After such measures and precautions taken
To thwart it, that a father thus should kneel
At his son's feet, a kingdom thus be shattered.
This was the sentence of the heavens above,
Which he could not evade, much though he tried.
Can I, younger in age, less brave, and less
In science than the king, conquer that fate?

To the KING.

Sire, rise, give me your hand, now that the heavens
Have shown you that you erred as to the method
To vanquish them. Humbly I kneel before you
And offer you my neck to tread upon.

BASIL. Son, such a great and noble act restores you
Straight to my heart. Oh, true and worthy prince!
You have won both the laurel and the palm.
Crown yourself with your deeds! For you *have* conquered!

ALL. Long live Segismund! Long live Segismund!

SEGISMUND. Since I have other victories to win,
The greatest of them all awaits me now:
To conquer my own self. Astolfo, give
Your hand here to Rosaura, for you know
It is a debt of honour and must be paid.

ASTOLFO. Although, it's true, I owe some obligations—
She does not know her name or who she is,
It would be base to wed a woman who . . .

CLOTALDO. Hold! Wait! Rosaura's of as noble stock
As yours, Astolfo. In the open field
I'll prove it with my sword. She is my daughter
And that should be enough.

ASTOLFO. What do you say?

CLOTALDO. Until I saw her married, righted, honoured,
I did not wish for it to be discovered.
It's a long story but she is my daughter.

ASTOLFO. That being so, I'm glad to keep my word.

SEGISMUND. And now, so that the princess Stella here
Will not remain disconsolate to lose
A prince of so much valour, here I offer
My hand to her, no less in birth and rank.
Give me your hand.

STELLA. I gain by meriting
So great a happiness.

SEGISMUND. And now, Clotaldo,
So long so loyal to my father, come
To my arms. Ask me anything you wish.

FIRST SOLDIER. If thus you treat a man who never served you,
What about me who led the revolution
And brought you from your dungeon in the tower?
What will you give me?

SEGISMUND. That same tower and dungeon
From which you never shall emerge till death.
No traitor is of use after his treason.

BASIL. All wonder at your wisdom!

ASTOLFO. What a change
Of character!

ROSAURA. How wise and prudent!

SEGISMUND. Why
Do you wonder? Why do you marvel, since
It was a dream that taught me and I still
Fear to wake up once more in my close dungeon?
Though that may never happen, it's enough
To dream it might, for thus I came to learn
That all our human happiness must pass
Away like any dream, and I would here
Enjoy it fully ere it glide away,
Asking (for noble hearts are prone to pardon)
Pardon for faults in the actors or the play.

LIFE IS A DREAM (1635), still perhaps the most celebrated of all Spanish plays, has been translated into English a number of times. The earliest attempt recorded by Pane is that of R. C. Trench (an incomplete translation) in 1856. After Trench came Fitzgerald (1865), though earlier he had written: "Such plays as the *Magico Prodigioso* and the *Vida es Sueño* require another translator"; MacCarthy (1873); William E. Colford (1958). (The foregoing have all been inspected by the present editor. Three others are mentioned in Colford's bibliography: Frank Birch and J. B. Trend in collaboration [1925], C. Morgan [1928], and W. F. Stirling [1942].) Of value to anyone wishing to produce the play is the French stage version by Alexandre Arnoux which was the fruit of a collaboration with Charles Dullin (in Calderón: *Trois Comédies,* Paris, 1955).

The most authoritative recent discussion of the play's meaning is, perhaps, "La vida es sueño," by E. M. Wilson, *Revista de la Universidad de Buenos Aires,* 1947. Along with this article, the following are recommended: the same author's "Gerald Brenan's Calderón," *Bulletin of the Comediantes,* 1952, and A. A. Parker's *The Approach to the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age,* a lecture separately published by The Hispanic & Luso-Brazilian Councils, London, 1957, and reprinted in The Tulane Drama Review, Autumn, 1959.